2

## CLAIMS

- 1. A method for providing information regarding a piece 1
- of electronic mail (e-mail), comprising: 2
- processing a data set containing transmission data 3
- associated with the e-mail so as to determine one or more 4
- 5 steps in a propagation history of the e-mail,
- transmission data including identifiers of a sender of 6
- the e-mail and of one or more recipients of at least a
- portion of the e-mail; and
- 9 displaying the propagation history.
- 1 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein processing the
- 2 data set comprises analyzing transmission information
- embedded in text of the e-mail.
- 3. A method according to claim 1, wherein processing the 1
- data set comprises analyzing transmission information not
- contained in text of the e-mail.
- 1 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the
- 2 propagation history comprises designating a first visual
- symbol to represent transmission of the e-mail to a
- primary recipient, and designating a second visual symbol
- 5 different from the first visual symbol to represent
- 6 transmission of the e-mail to a secondary recipient.
- 5. A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the
- 2 propagation history comprises designating a first visual
- 3 symbol to represent the sender and designating at least
- 4 one visual symbol different from the first visual symbol
- 5 to represent the one or more recipients.
- 1 6. A method according to claim 5, wherein displaying the
- propagation history comprises designating a first color
- for the first visual symbol and designating a second
- color, different from the first color, for the at least
- one visual symbol.

IBM DOCKET

- 7. A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the
- 2 propagation history comprises graphically displaying the
- 3 propagation history.
- 1 8. A method according to claim 7, wherein graphically
- 2 displaying the propagation history comprises graphically
- 3 displaying the steps in the history in an animation mode.
- 9. A method according to claim 7, wherein graphically
- 2 displaying the propagation history comprises:
- 3 displaying a representation of the sender and at
- 4 least one of the recipients; and
- 5 displaying a graphical representation of movement of
- 6 the e-mail from the sender to the at least one of the
- 7 recipients.
- 10. A method according to claim 9, wherein displaying the
- 2 graphical representation of movement comprises displaying
- 3 an arrow.
- 1 11. A method according to claim 1, wherein processing the
- 2 data set comprises determining two or more steps in the
- 3 propagation history of the e-mail, the transmission data
- 4 including for each step in the propagation history
- 5 identifiers of a sender and one or more recipients of a
- 6 respective portion of the piece of e-mail, wherein the
- 7 method comprises:
- 8 receiving from a user a designation of an electronic
- 9 mail correspondent;
- 10 finding at least one identifier in the transmission
- 11 data corresponding to the designated correspondent; and
- 12 displaying part of the piece of e-mail responsive to
- 13 finding the at least one identifier.
- 1 12. A method according to claim 11, wherein displaying
- 2 part of the piece of e-mail comprises displaying e-mail
- 3 content sent by the correspondent.

IBM DOCKET

- 1 13. A method according to claim 11, wherein displaying
- 2 part of the piece of e-mail comprises displaying e-mail
- 3 content sent to the correspondent.
- 1 14. A method according to claim 11, and comprising:
- 2 determining a location of the correspondent in a
- 3 hierarchy;

- displaying the hierarchy; and
- 5 identifying for the user the location of the 6 correspondent in the hierarchy.
- 1 15. A method according to claim 1, and comprising
- 2 receiving information regarding a relationship relating
- 3 members in a set, which set includes at least some of:
  - the sender and the one or more recipients, wherein
- 5 displaying the propagation history comprises displaying
- 6 the propagation history responsive to the relationship.
- 1 16. A method according to claim 15, wherein receiving the
- 2 information comprises receiving geographical information
- 3 about the members.
- 1 17. A method according to claim 15, wherein receiving the
- 2 information comprises receiving hierarchical and
- 3 geographical information about the members.
- 1 18. A method according to claim 15, wherein receiving the
- 2 information comprises receiving hierarchical information
- 3 about the members.
- 1 19. A method according to claim 18, wherein receiving
- 2 hierarchical information comprises receiving, for each
- 3 one of a plurality of the members, information
- 4 indicating: (a) who reports to that member and (b) to
- 5 whom does that member report.
- 1 20. A method according to claim 18, wherein displaying
- 2 the propagation history comprises:

IBM DOCKET

10

history.

- 3 displaying a hierarchy including the members in the
- 4 set; and
- 5 displaying the propagation history with respect to
- 6 the hierarchy.
- 1 21. A method according to claim 20, wherein displaying
- 2 the propagation history with respect to the hierarchy
- 3 comprises superimposing a representation of the
- 4 propagation history on the hierarchy.
- 1 22. A method for providing information regarding a piece
- 2 of electronic mail (e-mail), comprising:
- 3 scanning the e-mail so as to identify a sender or
- 4 recipient of at least a portion of the e-mail;
  - displaying a hierarchy; and
- 6 indicating on the hierarchy a location of the sender
- 7 or recipient in the hierarchy.
- 1 23. Apparatus for providing information regarding a piece
- 2 of electronic mail (e-mail), comprising:
- 3 a processor, configured to process a data set
- 4 containing transmission data associated with the e-mail
- 5 so as to determine one or more steps in a propagation 6 history of the e-mail, the transmission data including
- 7 identifiers of a sender of the e-mail and of one or more
- 8 recipients of at least a portion of the e-mail; and
- 9 a display, configured to display the propagation
- 1 24. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to analyze transmission
- 3 information embedded in text of the e-mail.
- 1 25. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to analyze transmission
- 3 information not contained in text of the e-mail.

- 1 26. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to designate a first visual
- 3 symbol to represent transmission of the e-mail to a
- 4 primary recipient, and to designate a second visual
- 5 symbol different from the first visual symbol t
- 6 represent transmission of the e-mail to a secondary
- 7 recipient.
- 1 27. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to designate a first visual
- 3 symbol to represent the sender, and to designate at least
- 4 one visual symbol different from the first visual symbol
- 5 to represent the one or more recipients.
- . 28. Apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to designate a first color for
- 3 the first visual symbol, and to designate a second color,
- 4 different from the first color, for the at least one
- 5 visual symbol.
- 1 29. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to drive the display to
- 3 graphically display the propagation history.
- 1 30. Apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to drive the display to
- 3 graphically display the steps in the history in an
- 4 animation mode.
- 1 31. Apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to drive the display to display a
- $\ensuremath{\mathtt{3}}$  representation of the sender and at least one of the
- 4 recipients, and to display a graphical representation of
- 5 movement of the e-mail from the sender to the at least
- 6 one of the recipients.

- 1 32. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
- 2 processor is configured to determine two or more steps in
- 3 the propagation history of the e-mail, the transmission
- 4 data including for each step in the propagation history
- 5 identifiers of a sender and one or more recipients of a
- 6 respective portion of the piece of e-mail, and wherein
- 7 the processor is configured to:
- 8 receive from a user a designation of an electronic
- 9 mail correspondent;
- 10 find at least one identifier in the transmission data
- 11 corresponding to the designated correspondent; and
- drive the display to display part of the piece of email responsive to finding the at least one identifier.
  - 1 33. Apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the
  - 2 processor is configured to:
  - 3 determine a location of the correspondent in a
  - 4 hierarchy;
  - 5 drive the display to display the hierarchy; and
  - 6 drive the display to identify for the user the
  - 7 location of the correspondent in the hierarchy.
  - 1 34. Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the
  - 2 processor is configured to receive information regarding
  - 3 a relationship relating members in a set, which set
  - 4 includes at least some of: the sender and the one or more
  - 5 recipients, and wherein the processor is configured to
  - 6 drive the display to display the propagation history
  - 7 responsive to the relationship.
  - 1 35. Apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the
  - 2 processor is configured to receive information regarding
  - $\ensuremath{\mathtt{3}}$  a hierarchical relationship relating the members, and to
  - 4 drive the display to display the propagation history 5 responsive to the hierarchical relationship.

- 1 36. Apparatus for providing information regarding a piece 2 of electronic mail (e-mail), comprising:
  - a display; and
- 4 a processor, configured to scan the e-mail so as to
- 5 identify a sender or recipient of at least a portion of
- 6 the e-mail, configured to drive the display to display a
- 7 hierarchy, and configured to drive the display to
- 8 indicate on the hierarchy a location of the sender or
- 9 recipient therein.
- 1 37. A computer program product for providing information
- 2 regarding a piece of electronic mail (e-mail), the
- 3 product comprising a computer-readable medium having
  - program instructions embodied therein, which
- 5 instructions, when read by a computer, cause the computer
- 6 to:
- 7 process a data set containing transmission data 8 associated with the e-mail so as to determine one or more
- 9 steps in a propagation history of the e-mail, the
- 10 transmission data including identifiers of a sender of
- 11 the e-mail and of one or more recipients of at least a
- 12 portion of the e-mail; and
- 13 display the propagation history.
  - 1 38. A computer program product according to claim 37,
  - 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
  - 3 cause the computer to analyze transmission information
  - 4 embedded in text of the e-mail.
  - 1 39. A computer program product according to claim 37,
  - 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
  - 3 cause the computer to analyze transmission information
  - 4 not contained in text of the e-mail.
  - 1 40. A computer program product according to claim 37,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,  $$\tt IBM\ DOCKET$$  25
  - #IL9-2000-0047

- 3 cause the computer to designate a first visual symbol to
- 4 represent transmission of the e-mail to a primary
- 5 recipient, and to designate a second visual symbol
- 6 different from the first visual symbol to represent
- 7 transmission of the e-mail to a secondary recipient.
- 1 41. A computer program product according to claim 37,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to designate a first visual symbol to
- 4 represent the sender and designate at least one visual
- 5 symbol different from the first visual symbol to
- 6 represent the one or more recipients.
- 1 42. A computer program product according to claim 41,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to designate a first color for the
- 4 first visual symbol and designate a second color,
- 5 different from the first color, for the at least one
- 6 visual symbol.
- 1 43. A computer program product according to claim 37,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to graphically display the propagation
  - history.
- 1 44. A computer program product according to claim 43,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to graphically display the steps in
- 4 the history in an animation mode.
- 1 45. A computer program product according to claim 43,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to:
- 4 display a representation of the sender and at least
- 5 one of the recipients; and

- display a graphical representation of movement of the e-mail from the sender to the at least one of the recipients.
- 1 46. A computer program product according to claim 45,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to display an arrow to represent the
- 4 movement.
- 1 47. A computer program product according to claim 37,
- wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to determine two or more steps in the
- 4 propagation history of the e-mail, the transmission data
- 5 including for each step in the propagation history
- 5 including for each step in the propagation history
- 6 identifiers of a sender and one or more recipients of a
- 7 respective portion of the piece of e-mail, and wherein
- 8 the instructions, when read by the computer, cause the
- 9 computer to:
- 10 receive from a user a designation of an electronic 11 mail correspondent;
- 12 find at least one identifier in the transmission data
- 13 corresponding to the designated correspondent; and
- 14 display part of the piece of e-mail responsive to
- 15 finding the at least one identifier.
  - 1 48. A computer program product according to claim 47,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to display e-mail content sent by the
- 4 correspondent.
- 1 49. A computer program product according to claim 47,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to display e-mail content sent to the 4 correspondent.

- 1 50. A computer program product according to claim 47,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to:
- 4 determine a location of the correspondent in a
- 5 hierarchy;
- 6 display the hierarchy; and
- 7 identify for the user the location of the
- 8 correspondent in the hierarchy.
- 1 51. A computer program product according to claim 37,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to: (a) receive information regarding
- 4 a relationship relating members in a set, which set
- 5 includes at least some of: the sender and the one or more
- 6 recipients, and (b) display the propagation history
- 7 responsive to the relationship.
- 1 52. A computer program product according to claim 51,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to receive geographical information
- 4 about the members.
- 1 53. A computer program product according to claim 51,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to receive hierarchical and
- 4 geographical information about the members.
- 1 54. A computer program product according to claim 51,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to receive hierarchical information
- 4 about the members.
- 1 55. A computer program product according to claim 54,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to receive for each one of a plurality
- 4 of the members, information indicating: (a) who reports
- 5 to that member and (b) to whom does that member report. IBM DOCKET 28

#TT-9-2000-0047

- 1 56. A computer program product according to claim 54,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to:
- 4 display a hierarchy including the members in the set;
- 5 and
- 6 display the propagation history with respect to the 7 hierarchy.
- 1 57. A computer program product according to claim 56,
- 2 wherein the instructions, when read by the computer,
- 3 cause the computer to superimpose a representation of the
- 4 propagation history on the hierarchy.
- 1 58. A computer program product for providing information
- 2 regarding a piece of electronic mail (e-mail), the
- 3 product comprising a computer-readable medium having
- 4 program instructions embodied therein, which
- 5 instructions, when read by a computer, cause the computer
- 6 to:
- 7 scan the e-mail so as to identify a sender or 8 recipient of at least a portion of the e-mail;
- 9 display a hierarchy; and
- 10 indicate on the hierarchy a location of the sender or
- 11 recipient in the hierarchy.